THOMAS AND FRIENDS BIBLE

(A Work in Progress)

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INTRODUCTION

Thomas and Friends is a series of half hours of all new adventures about everyone's favorite steam engine. Each half hour will include three seven minute stories plus three minutes of interstitials, all linked by a common theme.

SETTING: THE ISLAND OF SODOR

Sodor is an imaginary island created by the Reverend W. Awdry supposedly based upon the Isle of Man. On Sodor, trains are powered by steam… and they talk. It's an idealized world with a strong community ethos typified by a universal willingness to help, good manners and hard work.

Sodor is analogous to the world a child might build around a set of train tracks. It has certain physical features such as Brendham Docks, Tidmouth Sheds, Gordon's' Hill, the viaduct, the Quarry, Thomas' branch line and all the stations. The fact the geography of Sodor is worked out and constant helps support the organizing principle of Navigating Your World.

The most important feature of Sodor is its railways. Sodor has two very distinct railway systems - **mainline** and **narrow gauge**. This distinction may not seem important, but as the technical department will tell you, they are different worlds.

The **mainline** is, as the name suggests, the main line. The tracks are wider and there are more of them - usually three - one in either direction and a middle one for freight. The mainline operates as both passenger and freight carrier, and all the principal characters - (Thomas, Gordon, Edward, James, Toby, Percy, Emily and Henry) are mainline engines.

If you think of the *main* lines of the mainline as the major arteries, then the veins running off them are the *branch* lines.

These countryside lines are usually limited to one track, and are generally used by the smaller engines (e.g., Thomas, Percy and Toby). For an engine, being given one's own branch line is an honor.

Branch lines can have **sidings** (small sections of tracks running nowhere - railway parking spaces) that are very useful story-wise.

Being adjacent to roads, fields, level crossings etc…engines can interact with off rail characters such as Bertie the Bus, Trevor the Tractor, Harold the Helicopter and Elizabeth the Vintage Sentinal Lorry.

Mainline and branch lines can take us to all sorts of places - fishing villages, farming communities, quarries and coalmines**.** There are story precedents for some of these locations; others can be laid out as the stories dictate (and be invented if necessary).

The quarries and coalmine stories usually involve the smaller diesels (Mavis) and engines (like Bill and Ben) with trucks in attendance.

Some lines have beautiful architectural features such as castles, windmills, and watermills. Others have pastoral scenery, which provide the backdrops for our run bys, hence the time allowed in each story for traveling shots.

The **narrow gauge** world is smaller in every sense of the word. The engines and rolling stock are smaller, the tracks tighter together, (think of a mini/scenic railway) allowing them to operate on much sharper curves and in the more remote mountainous regions.

There are seven narrow gauge engines Sir Handel, Duncan, Duke, Peter Sam, Rusty, Rheneas, and Skarloey.

Some passengers travel on these lines, but they are essentially used to carry slate and coal from mines, stone from quarries with the odd cow or sheep from the farms.

The work location often provides storylines. For instance the *quarry incline* where empty trucks are pulled up a slope using the gravity of full trucks going down, has featured prominently more than once.

The architecture is stone and slate as opposed to the red brick and sandstone of the mainline .The scenery is mountainous and frequently spectacular, and should be described as such.

MAIN CHARACTERS

The steam engines are like children in a playground, with Sir Topham Hatt as the adult. Though the engines are generally the same age, there are differences in status based on small distinctions. It's clear that Gordon is older than Thomas, for instance, though he may only be six and half to Thomas' six – a big difference if you're a child! Whatever their age, all the steam engines are basically good-natured and well-behaved. (Diesels, however, are another matter).

Work is central to how the engines see themselves. Thomas loves being sent on 'specials'; Percy loves taking the mail; Gordon's pride is strongly rooted in taking the Express, etc. There is no higher honor than being told by Sir Topham Hatt that you are a 'Really Useful Engine'.

Consequently engines never shirk, cut corners, or deliberately put anyone or anything at risk. Accidents happen sometimes as a result of foolishness, but never malice (and always with a 'luckily no-one was hurt' added).

The lack of malice is significant. Good behavior and good intentions are always rewarded. Naughty behavior has consequences. And it is naughty *not* bad. The engines may *tease* but they never bully. If Gordon or James misbehaves, they are always reprimanded. And they are always forgiven. This notion of 'redemption' (not that we would ever use the word) is important. No engine ever does or says anything that is not forgiven in the end.

Whatever the story, lessons are learned, humility and fairness triumphs and everyone is friends again by bedtime.

Steam engines only have two natural foes – Troublesome Trucks (who are a nuisance to everyone) and Diesels – (except the Good Diesels).

The golden rule concerning the engines' world is that it's a safe and recognizable place where children would want to play, knowing that the engines are their friends.

THOMAS: Thomas, a cheeky, friendly and reliable engine, is our central character. He's a tank engine because he carries extra boiler water in tanks flanking his smoke box (now you know). He also carries his coal in a small hopper rather than having a separate tender like most of the other engines.

Thomas is our hero, our "EveryEngine". Kind, with a strong sense of right and wrong, Thomas is also playful, unafraid of Gordon, Henry or any of the larger engines and a very good friend to Percy.

He has his own branch line with friends and coaches **Annie** and **Clarabel**, and is well loved by his passengers. He does shunt trucks but prefers passengers, hates smelly work – hauling fish, for example, and doesn't like his snowplow. Like most engines, he likes to keep his paint shiny and clean.

Sir Topham Hatt sends Thomas on plenty of specials.

'Specials' are an important part of Thomas and Friends storytelling. They're not only exciting to the engines (and children) but also useful to the production as through them we can introduce disparate elements easily (a Jet Engine, an Opera singer, a Red Air Balloon etc.) with limited exposition.

PERCY: Percy is vulnerable, suggestible and open to teasing. He's Thomas' best friend and equivalent to the youngest child in the playground. Insecure and protective of his favorite work - taking the mail, Percy is one of the most popular of all the Thomas characters.

Like Thomas, Percy can be more often found traveling along a branch line than on a mainline. He works the many mines and quarries around the Island and is consequently not the cleanest engine in the sheds ('Dirty Percy' as he's been called) – although he does love being clean when he gets the chance.

He's extremely useful as a foil for explaining things. If a word or idea is beyond the audiences' reach, then Percy questions it, giving a reason for a simple explanation.

Percy always wants to do his best, and models the admirable quality of perseverance that is so important in this world.

JAMES: James is fabulously narcissistic. He's an all-purpose engine, which means he works both the main and branch lines, pulling trucks and occasionally smaller coaches. He's the same size as Edward, with a coal tender at the rear (which means he can't shunt).

In the playground, James comes somewhere between Thomas and Henry and Gordon. He's not vulnerable the way Percy is, but his undisguised vanity makes him open to teasing. He lacks the status to be truly pompous. Because he's selfish and narcissistic, the temptation is to cast James in the baddie role. But he isn't bad. He just thinks he's special - why else would he be the only red engine on the Island?

He often says something provocative that can help to emphasize the *feeling* part of a story –maybe criticizing Percy's appearance, which is then later resolved by an apology or gentle reprimand.

He's the closest thing *Thomas and Friends* has to a rebel, capable of refusing to do things, and showing off for the sake of it. James is never dull, and brings color and attitude wherever he goes.

GORDON: Gordon is pompous, self satisfied and large. He's a blue mainline engine with a coal tender (identical to Henry) who pulls The Express and believes shunting is beneath him. He's the fastest engine on Sodor and will jump at any chance to go faster.

As one of the oldest children in the playground he mimics adult behavior by not simply being vain, but by believing he isn't, thinking of himself as 'important' and 'responsible'. He's an outstanding example of Big Fish Small Pond.

Gordon's' pomposity causes problems and is a good source for stories. As with James, matters are always resolved kindly and fairly.

Gordon knows Sir Topham Hatt is his boss and, like all the other engines, endeavors to be reliable and useful… providing the job is good enough!

TOBY: Toby is the oldest and wisest of the principal characters. Toby is a branch line steam tram, whose over-riding feature is square-ness. Both his face and body are square, and his body is wood, not metal and he can travel forwards and backwards, so doesn't need a turntable. He's very proud of his cowcatchers.

He was rescued from the scrap heap by Sir Topham Hatt. He's even more vulnerable than sickly Henry, because as a tram, he isn't as fast or strong as even the smaller engines.

In the past Toby's appearance has been cause for comment/teasing which has created opportunities for an important *Thomas and Friends* rule to be reiterated: looks are not as important as what's inside. And the most important thing for an engine is to try your hardest. And Toby tries harder than most.

Toby has his own line, usually accompanied by his friend and coach Henrietta but can also work at the quarry with Mavis (see *diesels*.) He has strong links with the farming community he serves, and is good friends with Thomas and Percy.

HENRY: Henry is a worrier – an engine hypochondriac who has to burn special coal. He's a little vain – but through insecurity, *not* because he thinks he's the best. Identical to Gordon, but a lively shade of green, Henry pulls freight, not the express.

He's one of the bigger engines/older children, but more modest and less prone to 'acting out' than Gordon (or James).

He's also superstitious and is easily spooked.

Unless given his own episode it's easy to overlook Henry, as he's not as visible as James, Percy, Gordon and Thomas. But Henry is nevertheless a key member of Tidmouth Sheds, and should not be forgotten.

EDWARD: Edward is a frail and vulnerable engine. The same size and shape as James but the same color blue as Gordon, Edward is a mainline engine with a coal tender at the rear. He pulls both trucks and smaller coaches and is often used as a 'back engine' - helping push engines who need it, up steep hills. This help is sometimes resented.

Edward was the second engine on the Island (Number Two), but unlike Gordon, age doesn't mean dominance, it means vulnerability. He can be thought of as an elderly relative - mortal and afraid of being *scrapped* (see style guide). He has been picked on because his engine in not as powerful as others and his rods rattle, but smaller engines, especially Percy, like Edward and feel protective towards him.

Like Henry, Edward is not as prominent as some of the other characters, but he shouldn't be overlooked. If a scene is set at the sheds, the likelihood is Henry and Edward are there, and where possible/appropriate should be given a line.

EMILY: Emily is a Little Miss Bossy Buffers who thoroughly enjoys being Emily.

Roughly Thomas' age, she feels slightly older than Thomas (and definitely older than Percy) but that could just be that as a girl she's that much more mature. Clever, cheerful and confident (low self esteem is not a problem for Emily), Emily loves giving other engines the benefit of her advice, and then making sure they follow it.

If she were in a playground, she'd organize all the younger kids into playing her game, her way, with her knowing all the rules. They'd probably have a very good time. But not as good as Emily.

But Emily is not a mean engine. She's a well meaning bossy buffers, but not a bully. And behind her bossiness lies genuinely good intent. She wants everything to be just so. And she doesn't pick on anyone – she's just as fearless with the bigger engines. If a helpful comment or cheeky aside is there for the making, Emily will cheerfully oblige.

A beautiful emerald green Stirling Single, Emily's design is unusual – she has only two drive wheels but they are very large. Emily carries passengers and will usually work on the main line, but loves it when Sir Topham Hatt gives her a challenge.

Emily always thinks she's up to it.

ADDITIONAL CHARACTERS

One of the strengths of *Thomas and Friends* is that diversity is a natural part of this world. Thomas has more than seventy friends, representing a variety of sizes, ages, colors, and a vast range of abilities, attitudes, life views and personalities.

BILL and **BEN**: Bill and Ben are twins and true children - highly competitive (with each other) prone to jealousy and bickering, and motivated by pranks, games and having fun.

They're the smallest mainline engines, light ochre and yellow with red buffer beams.

They don't bed down at the sheds, so are not part of those scenes, although they can interact with Thomas, Percy, Salty, Cranky the Crane etc. at Brendham Docks, and can be seen traveling (with trucks) up and down the mainline.

They are each other's best friend. They don't carry passengers, and have no carriages - they don't stop and talk to children as Thomas does, or feel part of the community the way Toby does. Their world is the quarry and the docks.

They have an outspoken dislike of diesels (except Mavis and Boco and a reluctant admiration for Salty).

Bill and Ben are given to short punchy sentences, often as couplets i.e.: what you would normally give to one engine, with Bill and Ben you line split it. They are *always* together and *always* fun characters who bring energy and playfulness to a scene.

HARVEY: Harvey is big-hearted and relentlessly cheerful. He's also unique. He looks extraordinary with a bulbous face and a crane arm that can rotate 360-degrees on top of his smoke box enabling him to load and unload trucks either in front or behind him.

Mocked by James and Gordon for not looking 'normal' when he arrived, Harvey proved himself to be very useful by clearing up after a crash, so is now a popular addition to the group.

He's a mainline worker, but because of his shape, doesn't fit into the Tidmouth Sheds and has to park parallel. This means he can overhear the principal characters' conversations, but not quite join in.

His voice booms, and he loves helping others. He's happy working in the yards, the Docks and building sites, but his true home is at the 'Sodor Water Works'.

Harvey can be brought naturally into many scenes, clearing up after accidents, helping load flatbeds, bringing water if an engine runs out, or just working as an engine.

DONALD and **DOUGLAS:** Another set of twins, but this time Scottish. Medium-sized, black with separate tenders they're used on the mainline, if infrequently.

Like Bill and Ben, they're good fun characters, proud, hardworking, prone to bickering and competitiveness. They work better with each other than anybody else (very co-dependant).

Because they work on the mainline, they can be included on any mainline story. i.e. you can have a lead character pull up at a station and have Donald and Douglas there to give comment. (Free with their opinions, they have on occasion deliberately goaded other characters).

They are easily slighted if they think the other is favored, and like Bill and Ben, compliment each other in conversation.

It would be exceptional to have one included in a scene without the other, and just as exceptional to have only one speaking. If you get Donald, you get Douglas too.

Despite their jealousy they're loyal to each other, and capable of great bravery.

STEPNEY: Stepney is a late addition to the railway, rescued from the dreaded scrap yards. He is yellow-ochre a general shunting engine and, like Thomas, does not have a separate tender.

He does not bed down at the sheds, does not carry passengers and has no coaches.

He's not a main player in the playground, but he is in the school and story-wise can be useful because he runs on the *bluebell line*, which runs adjacent to the *narrow gauge* lines, Stepney is one of the few steam engines that can naturally come into contact with that world.

DUCK: Duck is a green medium-sized, odd-shaped engine without separate tender. He's strong and works all over the Island, pulling freight and coaches.

Duck is another 'supporting engine' - kind-hearted, easy-going, sticks to the rules etc…who if he's not the central engine in a story, can be a great character actor, coming in for two or three lines, supporting the lead.

And, like Toby, he looks very individual. Unlike Toby, the bigger engines respect Duck because he is a "Great Western" (the mainline railway line he originally came from).

OLIVER and **TOAD:** Another green Great Western Engine without a separate tender, Oliver's duties are similar to Duck's or Stepney's. Toad is his brake van.

They were rescued from the scrap yard by Donald and Douglas, and are frightened by the very word "scrap".

Toad has a white roof and is used at the rear of the freight trains and passenger coaches. His function, like any van, is to help stop the train. Toad also carries the guard or porter.

Oliver and Toad are inseparable. Oliver often tries too hard and makes mistakes. Toad, on the other hand, has a lot of common sense, but is still not the sharpest knife in the box.

Like Percy, Oliver can carry feelings of childlike insecurity – 'if mom has another baby, she won't want me anymore' kind of thing, and his vulnerability makes him very sympathetic, even if he may not behave well.

FERGUS: Fergus is a Traction Engine (Aveling and Porter) whose main function is to shunt trucks at the Cement Works. It's dusty work and has left him with a slight but persistent cough, which punctuates his speech. Fergus is a reliable down-to-earth character, who believes in playing by the rules (he knows the Rule Book off by heart).

Unsurprisingly, he's resistant to change and can be irritated when other engines "muck about."

Physically, Fergus is blue with red wheels and a tall funnel. He has a flywheel which can be used to power tools, such as a saw, drill or pump.

Fergus won't come into contact with the larger engines (like Gordon, Henry, James) but he can meet the smaller engines, such as Thomas and Percy.

As a shunting engine he can work at the Smelters Yard, the Docks and the Quarry, where he'll work with engines like Bill and Ben and Salty. He is suspicious of diesels, whom he considers "new fangled."

SPENCER: Spencer is a top-of-the-range classy steam engine with a tender - an A4 Pacific. He's metallic silver with blue details. Privately owned by the Duke and Duchess of Boxford, Spencer is a bit of a snob with a posh accent. And like a royal train he pulls Pullman coaches, a private dining car, etc.

Faster and more powerful than even Gordon, Spencer believes timetables are for ordinary engines and should be rearranged to accommodate him. But hubris claims another victim. Spencer may think he's the fastest and most efficient engine ever, but he forgets that like all steam engines - he can't run without water!

Sir Topham Hatt's engines are relieved that Spencer is only a visitor to Sodor - (The Duke and Duchess are building a holiday house on the Island.)

MURDOCH: Murdoch is a large tender engine (as big as Gordon) type 9F. He is a rich earthy brown color with smoke deflectors on either side of his "face" which stop smoke entering the cab. Having ten wheels means Murdoch is exceptionally powerful, capable of pulling very heavy loads. However, he isn't very fast.

A quiet and thoughtful engine – Murdoch is a gentle giant and good listener. Never one to push himself forward, he has to be drawn into conversation, even when he has something interesting to contribute. As an instinctive peacemaker he finds conflict between other engines unbearable and will assert himself to sort things out. The other engines like and respect Murdoch – still waters run deep.

Murdoch is a mainline engine and only carries freight (on the middle track of the mainline), and will most commonly come into contact with the larger engines.

ARTHUR: Arthur is a burgundy tank engine – type LMS 2-6-2. He's bigger than Thomas (same size as James) and is the largest tank engine on the island. He can pull heavier loads

than the other tank engines, both freight and passengers and can work on mainline or branch-lines.

Arthur is polite, well behaved and takes his responsibilities to heart. Thomas thinks Arthur could do with relaxing a bit. Naturally cautious, Arthur always weighs up the risks, and always prefers the safer option.

But Arthur is not a killjoy or a wet blanket – he simply doesn't like being in unpredictable situations. The other engines like him – but his desire to be dutiful is tempting when Thomas is in a mischievous mood!

DIESEL-DRIVEN MAINLINE ENGINES

DIESEL: The original diesel of the series. He generally works in most areas, but can often be found working in the scrap yards or smelting works.

DEVIOUS DIESEL: Along with Troublesome Trucks, Devious Diesel is a bad guy. Voiced in a nasal fashion, he is oily, sneaky and not to be trusted.

Sir Topham Hatt, being a businessman, will use Devious Diesel when he needs to, regardless of the steam engines' feelings. Which are clear. They don't like Devious Diesel and he doesn't like them. He believes steam engines are a thing of the past, that he is the way of the future, and seeks to undermine them whenever he can.

Though Devious Diesel is the equivalent of the playground bully, his plotting and deviousness are always thwarted (right over might!), and he always gets his comeuppance.

Devious Diesel is an excellent and entertaining mainline foe and can work in any area required, but favors the scrap yards, smelting works, or docks.

HARRY and **BERT:** Known as the "yellow diesels," they are olive green and yellow in color, and the same shape as the Black Diesel. They work hard in the scrap yard and the Docks area.

As with Bill and Ben, and Donald and Douglas, these two are a pair, Harry being the leader, Bert following. They're very conspiratorial, thick as thieves, and should be written as such.

Like Devious Diesel, they'd love to scrap steam engines and grab any opportunity to play tricks on them. Steamers have to be careful around them.

MAVIS: Mavis is black with yellow chevrons around her face, and a skirt like Toby.

A quarry-based engine (originally from the Pfarquahar Iron Works) - often working with Bill and Ben, Mavis is tough, hard working and no nonsense. But she does have a sensitive side, and is aware of how other engines are feeling, and is concerned is someone is sad or upset. Mavis has made a good friend in Toby, and considers Boco her mentor. She dislikes Devious Diesel, (who has tried to trick her in the past) and is keen to get out onto the mainline.

In terms of status, in the quarry she is clearly older and more mature than Bill and Ben, with twice the common sense, and can tell them what to do (whether they listen or not).

She is definitely a Good Diesel, who prefers the company of steamers.

SALTY: Salty is a dockside diesel with a rust red body and square grubby weather-beaten face. He's called Salty because he loves everything about the sea, and has worked at docks the world over. This has left him with a wealth of stories, and he has a tale for every occasion, whether his audience wants to hear it or not.

Salty is good at his job - so good in fact that he's the only engine, steam or diesel that can handle trucks. He has that special knack…

He works at the docks as a shunter, and can be included when Thomas picks up a special, or when Gordon collects passengers from a liner etc….

He's a cheerful, lively, fun character and one of the few whose experience extends beyond Sodor.

He's definitely a Good Diesel.

DAISY: Daisy is a motorized branch-line coach (coach and engine combined) and the only passenger-carrying diesel on Sodor.

Self-centered, she doesn't like smelly engine sheds, refuses to pull trucks and is indifferent to all the engines. She's beholden to her driver and engineer, and fiercely loyal to both of them. If they're not with her, she won't move.

(Note: Daisy can't appear on screen with Boco as they share the same chassis.)

BOCO, THE BIG DIESEL: Boco is another Good Diesel – the oldest of the diesels, more like an adult than a child. His name comes from his wheel arrangement: "BO" refers to the single drive axle on the front bogie and "CO" to the triple drive axles on the rear bogie.

Used for odd jobbing, as well as pulling passengers and freight on the mainline, he's a softie, a gentle giant.

He works a lot with Bill and Ben and Mavis in the quarries.

CLASS 40 -- This diesel is a large working diesel usually used in mainline areas pulling freight or passengers. Physically, he's similar to Boco, though slightly darker green with a gray roof. He has a distinctive yellow edging around his face. The class 40 is originally a British rail design circa 1953.

THE PAXMAN -- The name derives from the engine type used to drive this large diesel. He is distinctive in that his cab is in the middle of his long body. He is British racing green in color with a black roof. Although he would normally work in yards or stations, he has worked in quarries on the Island of Sodor.

NARROW GAUGE ENGINES

RUSTY: An orange narrow gauge, Rusty's main job is in the quarries, but she works as a track clearer, and lives to keep the lines free of debris. Kind and generous, Rusty is an engine version of the word "plucky."

All the engines respect Rusty (except Duncan who doesn't like anybody very much, though he does respect Rusty's work).

Rusty is a heroic diesel.

RHENEAS: Also an orange narrow gauge engine. Old friends with Skarloey, Rheneas is brave, likes being a narrow gauge, and although versatile, prefers passengers to freight.

His and Skarloey's lines are traditionally the most beautiful on the Island of Sodor.

SKARLOEY: A red narrow gauge steam engine, and Rheneas' best friend, Skarloey is a leader. Prepared to stand up and be counted, he nonetheless won't take undue risks and has great regard for the perils in his working environment. Working the quarries and the mountains creates a kind of hardness, which Skarloey exhibits. He's a team player.

Rheneas, Skarloey and Rusty are a great little trio who really like each other. They're the kind of schoolyard pals who'll stick up for each other and share their candy without having to be asked.

SIR HANDEL: Older than the three pals, Sir Handel is a Royal blue narrow gauge steam engine with a slightly superior attitude. The namesake of the former owner of the railway, he tends to support Duke, the oldest and wisest Narrow Gauge engine. Sir Handel is very friendly and always gives 110%

DUNCAN: A light ochre narrow gauge steamer who is similar in nature to James. He can be a real handful, as he's aggressive, skeptical, impatient and full of self-importance. He

contrasts strongly with Rheneas, Skarloey and Rusty, and there's much fun to be had seeing Duncan being brought down to size or hoisted by his own petards.

DUKE: Ochre in color, Duke is a mythic character and the only narrow gauge engine with a separate tender. He's probably the oldest of the narrow-gaugers -- the old geezer. He's been everywhere and done everything. He was once buried in his shed by a landslide and re-discovered years later.

PETER SAM: A proud, pea green narrow gauge steam engine. He once lost his funnel and was given a new one that he's even more proud of. Keen to work, he gets upset if things don't go his way. He's slightly impatient with weather conditions. But for all that he's a team player and much loved.

NON ENGINE CHARACTERS

SIR TOPHAM HATT: Sir Topham Hatt is an old-fashioned boss. His rule is never questioned, even by diesels. All engines address him as 'Sir,' and are never disrespectful, even when he isn't there.

Using the playground analogy, Sir Topham Hatt is the adult. Stories often start with him coming to the sheds with an announcement, news of a special etc. For all the engines, pleasing Sir Topham Hatt is paramount. Being called "Really Useful" is the highest praise of all.

Likewise, getting into 'trouble' has special significance. To the engines (as to children) just the word *trouble* has a tingle to it. Sir Topham Hatt wields that 'you'll be sent to the principle's office' type authority

"What will Sir Topham Hatt say?"

"Gordon found out soon enough."

As judge and jury he's very useful when resolving stories. He doesn't need to explain or justify himself. He gives the orders, and they are carried out.

A favorite Sir Topham Hatt word is 'sternly'. If he speaks <u>sternly</u> to you, you know you've just been reprimanded. As a businessman, Sir Topham Hatt is capable of making decisions that affect the engines emotionally – making them work with diesels, putting Gordon to shunting freight, cutting back on the number of wash-downs they can have - whatever the story needs.

The stationmasters and drivers respect and maybe even fear him, but don't always agree with him. He wants his engines to be "right on time and really reliable," and tries to run the railway to maximum efficiency; though sometimes his efficiency measures backfire.

One of his finest grown up qualities is that he'll admit when he's wrong. Children like this.

Sir Topham Hatt is a traditionalist, who would rather repair and preserve than replace. He has 52 hats - one for every week of the year, and is particularly fond of his old car.

LADY HATT: Lady Hatt is Sir Topham Hatt's wife, though we don't see her all that often. She believes in modernizing, so she's always after Sir Topham Hatt to upgrade, update and spend what it takes to do so.

THE DRIVERS (and firemen): The status of the drivers or firemen has changed from that in series 1- 7. Previously the drivers HAD to be mentioned when describing actions or movements that the engines made. For instance, engines could not just 'slow down' or 'go faster'. Their volition had to be filtered through the driver, i.e. "the driver applied the brakes."

But this has all changed. Now you don't need to mention drivers and fireman, unless their presence is material to the story. Allowing the engines a greater degree of volition means many more story choices can be made. (Bear in mind, though, that despite their increased volition, engines still can't change track points, so independent journeys should be checked with the technical dept. For example, Thomas could independently go up and down his branch line, but could not simply decide to cross the island to visit someone.)

Drivers still have a place though. They still operate as benign authority figures, who enforce railway safety law. For instance, in "Fireworks," when the story requires James to be delayed, he encounters a red signal…

> *"Hurry up!" wheeshed James crossly. "I haven't got all day!"*
>
> *"We can't move until we know it's safe," said his driver. "We shall have to wait here*!"

The driver made the scene work.

Engines may still talk to their drivers and vice versa. This saves a lot of "'Oh my,' said Thomas to himself" type of dialogue. Engines *always* have someone to talk to. But remember, try not to give the human models long sentences. It's difficult to make it look interesting because frankly they don't do much, except point. Also, although we've successfully used time lapse to suggest models moving i.e.: passengers boarding, we're keen not to do this, so don't write it in without checking.

ANNIE & CLARABEL: Thomas' light brown, gray-roofed coaches and friends. If Thomas is not shunting, then he is usually pulling Annie and Clarabel on his own branch line, much to the joy of his passengers and local children.

As characters, Annie and Clarabel don't tend to say much, but they are popular with the audience, and look good in a scene.

If present, they should be name checked. You would never have Thomas pulling them and not have the storyteller announce it.

BERTIE, THE BUS: An old fashioned red, single-decker passenger bus. Bertie's job depends on inter-connecting with the engines, and he gets out of sorts if they're late. Loved by his passengers, he's proud of the service he provides and has never had an accident.

He's friendly with all the engines, but he and Thomas have a special relationship.

Bertie is a great off-rail character whom the engines – especially Thomas - can stop and chat with, and whose journeys have a nice scenic feel to them.

He has a driver, but this is rarely acknowledged.

HAROLD THE HELICOPTER: An old-fashioned white-shared chopper who can land on water as well as land. He lives at the airfield by Dryad Railway Station.

He's daring, dedicated and determined. His main job is to patrol the island for search and rescue operations, dropping food for snowbound villages, spotting damaged track, etc.

He likes taking work from Thomas and Percy – but only to tease them.

Not being rail or road bound, Harold can be included in almost any scene required, although if you want fancy flying, check with the director first….

CRANKY, THE CRANE: Cranky is a tall, cantankerous dark green dockside crane that towers over Brendham Docks. His job is to load and unload ships and trucks, but he is often awkward or difficult to work with.

If you need an accident at the docks for a storyline, Cranky is your man, or crane. He's not so much reckless as depressed, but he does drops things which to the audience is exciting and fun because it's slightly naughty.

He's the only truly dour character, which is funny in the context of Thomas' work-hard can-do positive attitude.

TROUBLESOME TRUCKS: the most annoying children in the whole playground, who live to cause mischief for the engines. The open trucks are the ringleaders, and the boxcars follow. They make up cheeky songs aimed at winding up whichever engine is pulling them.

As with the **drivers** and **fireman**, the trucks operate in an ambivalent world. Put bluntly, they can't move on their own. They have no powers of volition at all. So you can't have a scene where trucks decide to cause mischief by rolling away because they can't. Neither can they stop.

Trucks stop courtesy of a shunter (as in Wheeltappers and Shunters) who applies brake levers by hand from the track.

If an engine is pulling a line of trucks, however, the trucks are given to chanting, "Go! Go! Go!" as if they had some effect upon the speed. And they can mislead, pretending they're full when they're not, or suggesting the buffers are miles away when they're very close.

Trucks are not part of the moral world that needs re-establishing at the end of each episode. They never apologize, never feel guilt, neither do they learn and grow.

They just cause trouble. Every engine knows that.

ELIZABETH THE VINTAGE SENTINAL LORRY: Elizabeth is a low loading steam wagon and the first lorry Sir Topham Hatt ever rode. She is stubborn, proud and a touch regal. If she were a person, she'd be Judy Dench as Queen Elizabeth.

She doesn't suffer fools gladly, or anyone else for that matter, and is the only character ever to criticize Sir Topham Hatt. But he loves her, and after he rescued her, had her fully restored until she looked as grand as she ever did.

As a quarry lorry she is capable of moving vast amounts of heavy material, and can be included in any quarry story. She makes quite an entrance, and a lot of humor comes from her status games. Because she's an off road character you can position her anywhere.

TREVOR, THE TRACTION ENGINE: Trevor is the kind of traction engine you still see at country fairs.

He's green, has no roof, and is literally a portable engine. Belts put to the flywheel enable other implements to be driven, towed pulled or winched.

The railway uses Trevor for clearance purposes (landslips, trees across the line, etc), and the engines like him because he's Really Useful – and steam driven. He also helps out in the wood yards and farms where power and strength are essentials.

He was saved from the scrap yard by Edward (for which Trevor is very grateful) and is owned by the Vicar (he lives in his orchard) but operated by Jem Cole.

TERENCE, THE TRACTOR: Ochre/orange in color, he has a large, non-working plow in front and no cab.

He's jovial, friendly and helpful. He's powerful but his working areas are limited, as he runs on caterpillar tracks not wheels. He's friendly with Thomas, Percy and Toby, and works a lot with Toby in the Upper Island.

He tends to appear only in stories where he is essential to the plot (unlike say Bertie or Harold) - he once pulled Thomas out of a snowdrift, for instance. He can, however, be placed alongside tracks when plowing fields for farmers.

MINOR CHARACTERS:

BULGY, THE DOUBLEDECKER BUS: A red and cream double-decker bus who worked in competition with Bertie. He could carry twice as many passengers as Bertie, but due to sheer arrogance, he wrecked a bridge and himself.

Now he's a hen house in a field close to the bridge he damaged - a visual reminder of how not to behave.

GEORGE, THE STEAMROLLER: George is an ill-tempered green steam traction roller who has no love for the railways. If he can cause mischief, he will. He doesn't have a home, but is often sent to the wood yards as punishment. None of the engines like him.

CAROLINE: A rather old yellow and black car who is always concerned about blowing up, so she doesn't like to race. She's been run too hard in the past and it annoys her. She doesn't really have much to do with the engines, but could feature in off-rail stories.

BULSTRODE: A sea-going barge, formerly used to shiploads of rock. He was impatient with Dockers' and people who didn't understand the tide tables. He's now beached and children play on him. He would like to be re-floated and be really useful again.

OLD SLOW COACH: An extremely good-natured old-fashioned, stylish passenger coach, saved by Percy and Thomas from being scrapped (she's very grateful). She's been refurbished and looks like the coaches on the Orient Express, and is only used for special occasions.

THUMPER: A good-natured bright red pounding implement for ridding loose shale on the rocks. Thumper can drill as well but he must be transported to any worksite. A dedicated worker who doesn't like being idle.

BUTCH, THE BREAKDOWN VAN: "The cavalry is here." Very strong with a nature to match, Butch is a bit sour, because all he does is pick up wrecks.

ISLAND LOCATIONS

TIDMOUTH SHEDS – Tidmouth Sheds is an old roundhouse in the midst of an extensive yard and is a regular feature of Thomas. It looks simple, but has many sub-locations within it.

Most importantly there's the large six-berth engine **shed** where Thomas, Henry, Gordon, Percy, James and Edward 'sleep'. (Toby beds down at Arlesdale End).*WHERE DOES EMILY SLEEP? Stories often start here with Sir Topham Hatt arriving with details of the day's work, and often finish here, with the engines discussing the day's excitement. It has a lovely, warm 'goodnight John-boy' feel about it.

It's one of the few places where it's possible to have scenes with several mainline engines in at once, and also one of the few places where the engines can talk *privately*. Like a child's bedroom, this is a place where the engines naturally retire to if they're unwell or unhappy. But it's also the place where, if engines have fallen out, they have to face each other at the end of the day.

Leading to the shed is the famous **turntable**. This turns the engines around so that they can back into the sheds, and can provide nice visual business.

Elsewhere there's a **coach shed**, a small **workshop** and a **goods depot**. A **service line** runs through the yards where a small **service platform** is used for deliveries and collections. The **fitters yard** is close by as is the **large smelting shed** and breakdown cranes

Also featured many times are the nearby water towers and **wash down** area, which is the engines equivalent of the bathroom. And like a bathroom, who takes too long and who has to miss out is a source of real rivalry between the engines.

Controlling all the exit and entrance lines as well as the through line is the famous **signal box**. It is an engine's worst nightmare to have an accident in this area because all his or her pals will certainly know about it.

KNAPFORD MAIN LINE STATION -- The Grand Central Station of the Island, it is a three-platform, multi-line station with a curved glass roof. Resplendent in its classic Victorian architecture, it is the biggest and busiest station on Sodor -- the pride of the Sodor Railway.

Both passenger and freight trains travel to and through this station, and Gordon always parks at the Number 1 platform and gets cross if something prevents this.

Engines can converse here, and it's been the setting for several 'chickens-coming-home-to-roost' stories because the engines can be seem by the public.

If an engine is dirty, trapped in the middle of a line of trucks, or struggling to pull a load, it's one thing to do it on the privacy of a branch line, quite another in the full glare of the public. It's also where Sir Topham Hatt has his office - another reason for the engines not to be seen other than at their best.

BRENDAM DOCKS: Brendam is the main docks of the Island. It's a massive deep-water port which receives everything from huge passenger liners to freight barges to cargo ships. It long ago eclipsed Knapford Docks, which now are used only for minor goods export/import.

Brendham Docks is the setting for many stories, and characters such as Cranky the Crane are Salty are permanently based there.

Thomas and Percy regularly deliver freight or pick up 'specials'. Bill and Ben deliver from the quarry, and Gordon collects passengers from the liners, taking them inland on the Express. Henry collects the famous 'Flying Kipper' fish train from the fish market quay.

UPPER BRENDAM STATION -- A small mainline station near the big harbor, with two lines and one platform.

WELLSWORTH STATION AND YARDS -- Functional and unglamorous, Wellsworth is a mainline station with platforms on both sides and a goods line running through the middle. With a small goods yard with a turntable, this is Edward's domain. He works the yards and takes passenger and goods trains back and forth to Brendam Docks. It is the last station before Gordon's hill. Edward is often used as a 'backing' engine to help the engines pulling heavy loads up Gordon's Hill. Several branch lines lead away from the yards into the wilder countryside and spooky areas. Henry, susceptible to fright anyway, often thinks he sees ghosts along these lines. Percy and Thomas use the lines when delivering or picking up trucks from the quarries and farms.

GORDON'S HILL –A steep hill on the mainline named after an incident involving Gordon. In a typically pompous fashion, Gordon thinks it's named after him because he's the finest engine on the island. No engine likes this hill. It is steep and lots of accidents occur here. They often need a back engine (usually Edward) to help.

The views from the top, however, are spectacular.

After Gordon's hill are two stations: Maron, a small junction station and Crovansgate.

CROSBY STATION: This mainline station is similar to Wellsworth with the same platform layout and a similar goods yard and turntable.

CROVANSGATE – A very large mainline and narrow gauge station, and the only place where the main line, branch line and narrow gauge engines come together. Crovansgate is

where passengers wanting to explore the countryside and mountains cross the platform from mainline to narrow gauge.

Extensive marshalling yards lead to the Engine Works where damaged engines are repaired. It is the engines' form of hospital and they all dread going there. At Crovansgate, Thomas and his friends can meet and talk to Peter, Sam, and Rusty, and any other of the narrow gauge engines.

Close to these yards are the main engine sheds where the Narrow Gauge engines live and are serviced. From these sheds they journey on loop lines taking visitors and goods through the spectacular, if sometimes dangerous, scenery.

Because of the mountainous regions, there are small engine sheds dotted liberally around this vast area. One such is Bluebell Valley where Stepney lives and works, (see **Stepney**) and whose line junctions at Crovansgate.

THE SMELTERS YARD: the yard is a small mainline industrial complex. It is a wonderful location with chimneys billowing smoke, lots of scrap metal lying around and an overall look of untidiness. It's dominated by a sinister-looking interior full of dangerous claws and crabs. Harry and Bert often work this area and try to trick the smaller engines like Thomas or Percy.

Express engines such as Gordon or Henry would not normally come here, though James (if ordered) might from time to time.

DRYAD STATION -- A small country branch line station with twin platforms and three lines. The station backs onto Harold the Helicopter's Airfield, his home. The line leads to Elsbridge Junction Station**.** From here engines can go to the inland docks and canals or go Up Island to Toby's branch lines. Toby's line service small villages, farms, quarries and mines. Thomas and Percy often work these lines. Many adventures occur around these parts. The areas are steeped in history and have wonderful architectural features such as ruined castles, forts, watermills, windmills, old copper mines, dams, canals and lots of spooky areas.

Night work in this region is not greeted with enthusiasm by the engines. Godred the Impaler was based at Black Loch, a fantastically rugged and beautiful area. The loch is believed to be haunted by him to this day and his ruined castle overlooks the loch. Toby's branch line circumnavigates the loch and whenever the engines have an accident in this area they blame it all on Godred!

CALLAN STATION -- A small twin-platform mainline station with a distinctive metal lattice passenger bridge crossing the lines. It also has a small siding where trucks or coaches can be parked.

THE WESTERN COASTAL LINE travels from Toby's area, passing fishing villages and lovely sandy bays. Stations are dotted along the coast. Duck has his branch line here and Thomas, Percy and James often use it to transport passengers and freight to and from Brendam Docks. This line also links to the huge quarry areas where Bill and Ben work.

LAKELAND STATION -- This is the largest of the narrow gauge stations. Built alongside an inlet, it comprises a village nestling against the mountains with a rail and road bridge spanning the station and the village.

TIDMOUTH HAULT -- A small seaside station on the beach, with two lines and two platforms connected by a wooden passenger bridge.

LOWER TIDMOUTH -- A very small mainline station near the town of Tidmouth with two platforms and three lines.

THE COAL MINES -- Another industrial area located between Toby's line and Elsbridge. Percy and Thomas work these grim areas -- but without coal, no engine could run. Percy has had a lot of trouble with troublesome trucks at the mines, and usually comes off worse for wear, which is to say, filthy.

MAITHWAITE -- A small, single line and single platform branch line station near the mountains. Thomas, Percy, Toby and Bertie the Bus service this station.

ARLESDALE END -- A small, rarely used branch line station, which is Toby's home. It has a single line and platform. Toby's shed is also here. Serviced by Thomas, Percy and Bertie the Bus, as well as Toby.

FFARQUAHAR -- A large single platform branch line station with sidings at its front and a single line running through it. Also serviced by Percy, Thomas, Toby and Bertie the Bus.

EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM: NAVIGATING YOUR WORLD

The new *Thomas & Friends* series provides many educational opportunities. With the primary and most obvious theme being *trains*, a wide range of concepts can be considered:

- Colors
- Counting and ordinal numbers
- Vocabulary
- Language development
- Telling time

Because trains are interesting, relevant and meaningful to our audience, almost any concept can be introduced through a train theme.

Beyond the obvious theme of trains, the series will have an overriding theme – that of navigation. Literally, this theme will address topics such as:

- Map skills
- Directionality and positional words
- Problem solving
- Following directions
- Sequencing

This theme of navigation will also focus on "navigating through life," introducing such important life skills as:

- Friendship
- Cooperation
- Taking turns
- Sharing
- Patience
- Perseverance

There are several points of difference for Thomas & Friends:

- Storytelling is an integral part of each episode
- Trains are appealing to children – this fascination allows for many opportunities for learning and entertainment value in a subtle (to children) manner
- Map skills, directionality, and positional words are all relevant to Thomas and not ordinarily found in children's programming

It is apparent that Thomas & Friends is a program that addresses a variety of developmental skills – cognitive, social, and emotional – with many outreach possibilities.

Suggested Episode Topics:

- Introduction to the engines

- Individual differences (characteristics of each engine)
- Parts of a train (whistle, wheels…)
- Vocabulary (track, bridge, tunnel, engine, caboose…)
- Railroad signs (RR crossing, stop sign…)
- Routines/schedules
- Locations around Sodor
- other modes of transportation (car, bus, airplane…)
- Map skills
- Following directions
- Sequencing
- Positional words (over, under, in, on, through…)
- Emotions (happy, sad, angry, scared)
- Problem solving
- Friendship
- Taking turns
- Cooperation
- Sharing
- Perseverance
- Patience
- Celebrations (birthdays…)
- Weather (rain, snow, sun, wind)
- Seasons of the year
- Nature (trees, water, flowers, rocks…)
- Healthy habits (exercise, cleanliness…)
- Opposites (big/little, empty/full, dirty/clean, wet/dry, open/shut, stop/go, fast/slow)
- Primary colors (red, yellow, blue)
- Secondary colors (orange, purple, green)
- Geometric shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle)
- Ordinal numbers
- Counting
- Telling time

Themes from the curriculum when expressed through character and emotion can give us exciting heart-warming tales with satisfying conclusions.

FORMAT

Each half hour is structured like this:

Titles
Opening
Story 1
Interstitials
Story 2
Interstitials
Story 3
Roll Call
Credits

The **opening** is in two parts – the first part standard, the second customized for each episode. (See sample script attached.) The first part starts with an overhead shot of the Island of Sodor. We then get closer and closer until we dissolve through to an overhead shot of the island. Getting closer still, we focus on Thomas traveling along until we see the island from his point of view.

In the second half of the opening, the Storyteller prepares the viewers for the adventures they're going to see today.

Each story is seven minutes long. The three stories are linked by interstitials.

The **interstitials** range in length from 15 seconds to 1'30". They support the theme and curriculum and should be as interactive as possible ("Toot when you see Thomas!"). They can use a variety of formats from a full-blown music video with a song to stills to live-action footage of real trains. The Storyteller will lead the viewer through the activities presented in the interstitials.

The **roll call** comes at the end of every half hour and is a visual review of all the main engines. Who did you see today? We do a roll call on our videos and anecdotal information tells us that children absolutely love calling out the names of the engines as they appear on screen, one by one.

WRITING STYLE GUIDE

The style notes contained here serve to reinforce the idea that this is a safe, gentle and fun world for children – a world parents and caregivers can trust.

The storytelling in *Thomas and Friends* is undulating, with a gentle and simple cadence and authentic period feel. The stories are character-led, structured in three acts. At the beginning,

there is the "discovery moment" – where the main character's goal is revealed. Soon, we come to a "crack in the track" where we find an obstacle to the goal. With the help of his or her friends, the main character then tackles the problem. And in the end, the resolution – he or she is a Really Useful Engine. ** Stuff from presentation

Run-bys, an important part of every story because they reveal the geography of Sodor, are scripted with the concept of navigation in mind:

"Thomas puffed across the countryside.

He went over bridges...

And through tunnels...

Then he turned left at the windmill...

And right after Gordon's Hill...

Finally he saw the Big Oak tree!

Thomas' stories are all about heart and soul: caring, friendship, kindness, trying your best, never giving up, helping others, forgiving others, saying sorry, or if being naughty, then paying the price.

If you don't care, you haven't got a story. And what happens is *never* as important as how the engines *feel* about what happens.

The best stories are often very simple. And the pace is leisurely. The trains speak in the rhythm of a train chuffing.

All stories should have a soulful, uplifting quality. This is a world where "admitting you are scared means you are brave after all."

THE STORYTELLER

The Storyteller is not simply a narrator. The Storyteller is there to take the child by the hand and lead him through the story, as if he were on the Storyteller's knee turning the page.

The temptation is to use the Storyteller at the beginning of a scene to set everything up and then move onto dialogue, but this is not the rhythm of *Thomas and Friends*. The Storyteller actually takes up about 50% of all scripted material, and carries most of the exposition.

Engines carry very little. They concentrate on the feeling part of the story. The Storyteller declares a lot of the feeling words before we see them i.e.: The Storyteller says, "Percy was scared" - and then in the next scene the audience *sees* Percy being scared.

The Storyteller uses lots of modifying words like happily, cheerfully, sadly, spookily, kindly, nicely, gently, etc. "Thomas was *proudly* puffing along"… These are essential to the flavor of *Thomas and Friends*.

If you find a scene is getting bogged down, ask yourself, "Would this be better coming from the Storyteller?" Often, simply making this shift enables other things to fall into place.

AGE APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

Not only do we avoid using obviously complicated words (or "big words" as a child would say) we also never use extreme words, substituting gentle words and modifiers.

For instance, we never say *frightened*, *terrified* or *horrified*. We say *scared.* No one is ever *angry* or *furious*. They are *cross* or if pushed, *very cross*. Characters never *hate* or *detest* things - they *don't like* things.

Never use a two-syllable word when one will do. And be careful where words have one or more literal meanings that are obviously explicable to us by context.

For instance we had Sir Topham Hatt *holding* open-air concerts. Obvious to us, but to a two year old *holding* is what you do to a teddy bear or an ice cream. So it had to be changed.

It is possible to introduce special words if needed for the story, but they have to be explained…

If it's a word like 'deputation', Percy can ask what it means and another character can explain it in words understandable to a two year old (which is done sweetly and humorously - Percy is never a fool for not knowing).

Best of all is if you can explain and *show* what it means. For example in the episode 'Fogman' we needed the word 'detonators', and could explain them by having them going 'bang!'

Wherever possible use engine related terminology. "Bust my Buffers!" "Flatten My Funnel!" "Keep your headlights peeled!". This is a world of boilers, buffers, funnels, rails, steam, whistles, fireboxes etc, not hands, feet, tummies and toes.

ADJECTIVES/COLOR WORDS TO KEEP IN MIND

Grumbled
Huffed
Chuffed

Reliable
Useful
Chuckled
Boasted
Proudly
Clanked
Wheeshed
Trundled
Sniffed
Tingly (excited or weather)
Happily puffing
Cheerfully chuffing
Teased
Snorted
Steamed
Pouted
Hooted
Sternly
Jolly
Crossly
Excitedly
Anxiously
Boasted/boastfully
Wonderful/ Wonderfully

Simplicity is the key. Compound sentences make a demand that is beyond the reach of a Thomas audience. You should have no more than one thought per sentence. A sentence like:

> "Donald, too bad-tempered to explain, steamed out of the sidings, ran over a switched point and with a clanking and a crash, came off the rails!" would become: "Donald *was* bad tempered. He steamed out of the sidings. But he hadn't seen the points had been switched! Then there was trouble! Donald came off the rails with a terrible clank."

To which you would add - "luckily no one was hurt."

When in doubt, imagine reading to a two year old. She has to understand each sentence as it comes along, gradually building the picture. You can run together description only if supported by visuals i.e.:

"The sun was shining… (see sun) *… the birds were singing…* (see birds)*… and Sir Topham Hatt's engines were working hard all over the island."*

VERB TENSE

Thomas and Friends is written in the past tense. There is more than one form of past tense and we predominately use what is called the 'past continuous' and the 'past simple' tenses.

The past continuous tense is formed any time we put the word 'was' in front of a verb that ends with 'ing'. I.e. "Sir Topham Hatt *was* eat*ing* his porridge".

The past simple tense is formed by adding 'd' or 'ed' to the end of the verb. For example, 'puffs' is the present tense (or 'puffing' if we used 'is puffing') - 'was puffing' would be past continuous - and 'puffed' would be past simple.

Negative Verb examples: But James *couldn't* stop. Gordon *didn't want* any of Henry's coal. Sir Topham Hatt *wasn't* cross.

As with the modifying words, the balance between past simple and past continuous is part of Thomas' cadence and poetry.

FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTENT

Do not be afraid of repetition. Children love it. Anyone who has had to read a Thomas story to an eager young listener for the hundredth time will know how much pride children take in their ability to know and understand what is about to happen.

Children love seeing Thomas puffing down to the docks, or Percy carrying the mail, or Gordon pulling the express over and over again. You don't have to make it wildly different, as long as it's done simply, faithfully, and has an *emotion* attached to it.

If Thomas is collecting a special, he's *excited* by the special and the sense of responsibility. Gordon is *proud* to pull the express. Percy is *worried* he'll be late.

SAMPLE EPISODE (Full script attached)

THEME: APPRECIATING INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES.

Children begin to recognize differences in themselves and others at an early age. The ability to accept and understand others' skills and abilities is greatly facilitated when children develop confidence and a positive self-concept. Children should be regularly given positive reinforcement and encouragement for their accomplishments. This is also true for train engines…

Objectives:

- To demonstrate individual differences/abilities amongst engines (diesel vs. steam, passenger vs. freight, big vs. little, old vs. young…)
- To introduce the concepts of patience and perseverance when learning new skills
- To develop an appreciation for individual differences/abilities

Navigation:

Geographic locations on Sodor:

- Brendham docks
- The quarry
- The coal mines
- The mountains
- The windmill
- The forest
- The sawmill
- Wellsworth Station
- The sheds

Positional/directional terms:

- Over (bridges)
- Through (tunnels)
- Left, right
- Pull/push

Life lessons:

- Cooperative effort
- Respect for others
- Problem solving

IDEAS FOR FURTHER HALF HOURS

1) THEME: COPING WITH ADVERSITY

There are times when we are all faced with doing something that we don't want to do or that is difficult for us. It is important that young children be given opportunities to persevere—as well as accompanying encouragement to complete these tasks. The successful completion of a new, difficult, or unpleasant task serves as a stepping stone toward coping with future adversities.

Objectives:

- to recognize that it takes courage to assume risks and face adversity
- to learn that successfully completing a difficult task is hard work and perhaps unpleasant
- to identify the emotions involved while facing adversity (fear, worry, disgust, frustration)
- to discover that successfully completing a difficult task is rewarding

Navigation:

Geographic locations on Sodor:

- Brendham Docks
- The harbor
- Wellsworth Yard
- Gordon's Hill
- Farmer McColl's farm
- The valley

Positional/directional terms:

- Pull/push
- Up (hills)
- Through (valleys)
- Across

Life lessons:

- Risk-taking
- Perseverance
- Responsibility
- Problem solving

STORY CONCEPTS FOR THE EPISODE

2) THEME: LISTENING

Being able to listen is crucial for success in school (and life!). The time to help young children develop listening skills is during the preschool years. Paying attention, open communication, follow-through and respect are all components of good listening.

Objectives:

- to discover the necessity for being a good listener
- to understand the impact of not listening
- to demonstrate ways to help develop listening skills

Navigation:

Geographic locations on Sodor:

- Tidmouth
- The quarry
- The smelters

Positional/directional terms:

- Push/pull

Life lessons:

- Consequences
- Communication
- Respect for others

STORY CONCEPTS FOR THE EPISODE:

THOMAS, EMILY AND THE SNOWPLOW

It's winter and will soon be snowplow time – something Thomas dislikes intensely. Emily tells Thomas to go and have his snowplow fitted, but Thomas pretends not to hear. He embarks on a journey just as the weather changes and gets caught in a snowstorm. When his rescuer – Emily - arrives, Thomas thinks she should apologize for bossing him around. Emily says she's sorry - sorry Thomas didn't listen to her. And as he's slowly towed back to Tidmouth in front of all his friends - so is Thomas.

JAMES GETS A NEW COAT.

James has a new coat of paint and can't wait to tell everyone how splendid he is. When Edward warns James the troublesome trucks are being extra

troublesome, James isn't listening. Approaching the slate quarry, James tries to stop. But the trucks misbehave and James lurches forward, bumping into a truck full of slate dust. James' new paint is covered in gray silt. Now James is listening all right – to the sound of troublesome trucks giggling.

PERCY AND THE BIG MISTAKE

When Percy overhears Sir Topham Hatt talking he can just make out the words 'Percy' and 'scrap'. Oh no! He's going to be scrapped! He doesn't realize that what Sir Topham had said was that he'd decided that after collecting scrap from the smelters, he was going to let Percy carry the mail all week. Percy decides to run away. Thomas is sure Percy isn't going to be scrapped. With Thomas' support, Percy plucks up the courage to ask Sir Topham what his next job is. When Percy finds out the truth he promises never to listen to rumours again – especially ones started by him.